

NEH White Paper

Digitize and Publish 18 Out of Print Dance and Theatre Books

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## **Introduction:**

In the summer of 2016, the Wesleyan University Press began contacting the right's holders of eighteen out of print dance and theater books in order to once again make them available to readers. The goal was to make these books more accessible to not only scholars within the field but also any who had an interest in the subject material. With the generous funds provided by the NEH Grant, the Wesleyan University Press was able to gain the permission to make sixteen out of the eighteen books available for free online.

## **Project Activities**

We cleared rights for over 300 third-party images and digitized 16 out-of-print dance and theatre books. Starting in the summer of 2016, we created an in-depth tracker to ensure that the project would remain on schedule; this tracker has continued to be updated to the present. The tracker includes information and progress on copyright claims, administrative duties, meta-data related steps, eBook file creation, as well as distribution and marketing

schedules. In the fall of 2016, we updated the tracker, revisited a number of contacts with rights-holders that were left incomplete, and completed the retrieval of rights for third-party material as yet unexplored.

To begin the administrative and rights portion of the project, we pulled the contract file for each book that was to be included in the project from our Press archives. From this initial search, we found that the Press retained rights to ten of the eighteen books, and was missing the contracts for four books. After attempting contact with the rights holders of the remaining contracts, and researching in the Press archives held at Wesleyan University's Olin Library Special Collections & Archives, we found that the rights for two books had been reverted to the original author and licensed to a different publisher. These were excluded from the final project because they remain in print and the rights-holders were unwilling to allow the books to be included in this project.

We received permission for the remaining books with no clear indication that Wesleyan University retained the rights to them, ensuring that the remaining sixteen books in the project could be digitized.

In the summer, we asked professors of dance André Lepecki (of NYU Tisch) and Katja P. Kolcio (of Wesleyan University) to each write an introductory essay of 1,500 words maximum that would speak to the broader

significance of the project. They accepted, and later we received their essays, and used them as an introduction for the project on our website, and for other forums in which we planned to market and distribute the digitized books.

In October, we purchased two clean copies of each book for the purposes of scanning. The new copies were destroyed in the process of scanning, and the second copies remain in our Press's archives.

Beginning in January, we began compiling the rights information for each book into individual progress summaries of each book's progress in receiving rights. Each summary sheet includes a table with the title of the material in question, the location in the book of that material, whether or not the rights for the material have been obtained, and whether or not there would need be a change to the courtesy statement to go along with the material.

The rights status of certain materials were ambiguous, so we established descriptive codes to indicate when the presumed rights-holder was no longer extant, when the rights holder could not be established, if the rights holder was contacted with no response, and if the rightsholder was contacted and refused our request.

We made physical file folders for each book that include: a cover note describing the progress of the obtaining of rights, the summary sheet as described above, a copy of the book's copyright page, a copy of the book's

contract, a print out of the book's individual sheet from the progress-rights tracker, and all correspondence related to that book's digitization.

In early April, we drafted new copyright pages for each book that outline the book's basic information, a notice of the book's license (under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License), a note on the book's funding by the Humanities Open Book program, a note on any material removed from the digitized version due to rights not obtained, and any additional credit lines it was necessary to include depending on the rights obtained for third party material in the digital edition. The books were then submitted for scanning.

We used a number of methods to obtain rights from third party rights holders with varying amounts of success for each method. Emailing archives, libraries, and museums directly was most helpful when the inquiry was directed to a specific person at the institution whose position was particularly relevant to the material or question at hand. Contacting family members of deceased or older family members sometimes bred no results, and sometimes opened up an entire book to obtained rights. A multi-faceted and dynamic approach to each rights inquiry bred the most positive results in the process of obtaining rights for the digitized books. Rights holders were particularly receptive to the non-profit character of the project.

The process of obtaining the rights was an informative one for us, and could serve as a valuable lesson for other presses undergoing rights clearance. The process took far longer expected, and despite taking the magnitude of it into account, rights clearance still took twice as long as expected. The experience of obtaining the rights was also one of diminishing returns—most of the clearances were complete in first three months of the process, but in order to do our due diligence, we needed to spend far longer confirming and obtaining the rest.

The process was also lengthened as a consequence of our particular project's mission. Obtaining the rights to image-heavy texts that were mostly published in the 1950s and 1960s provided a unique challenge, as many of the images in these texts lacked suitable attribution. Tracking down the right holders and obtaining the rights for these images required personnel to search through sources like Google to find the original photographer. We were fortunate that several books sourced their images from only a few rights holders, but the image-heavy nature of the books was a significant factor in the rights clearance process.

Scanned files were checked and the new copyright pages added to each PDF. Metadata was created combining old data with new ISBN's and copyright information. We then sent in the scans to Ingram to be corrected. At

the same time, the ONIX files were sent to our library for conversion to MARC records. Epubs were sent to the library to be ingested and forwarded to HathiTrust. PDF's are posted in the University's repository, Wes Scholar.

We assigned each book a new ISBN, and we have included the new titles in our Fall 2017 catalog. We also designed the launch page for the project on our website, which includes the essays by Kolcio and Lepecki, information about each book, as well as instructions for accessing the eBook files. Our design intern created a special series design for the covers all of the titles in the project. A thumbnail of the original cover is embedded in this new series design. We like the visual coherence and branding afforded by the simple series design, and also the visual tie to the original editions. Once the project was live, we presented at the Congress on Research in Dance, and designed a color poster that was displayed at Society for Dance History Scholars, the Association for Theater in Higher Education, and the American Studies Performance Caucus. The audience for these digitized books will be primarily scholars and students interested in the theory and history of modern dance and theater. A handful of these titles will be of interest to general readers. We have also promoted the project and individual titles via email, social media, and press releases.

### **Accomplishments:**

With the aid of the NEH Grant, many of the objectives proposed within the application were met despite the appearance of multiple obstacles. Copies of the books suitable for scanning and conversion were often very difficult to obtain, despite their continuing relevance and importance within both academic fields. Thanks to the assistance provided by this grant, these texts are now available online for free to all who seek to expand their knowledge on these subjects. Wesleyan's goal of bringing together a multitude of voices shines here, for the books offer a variety of different perspectives. This in turn draws in a variety of students who are seeking for multiple opinions and views of the subject. To accomplish this, hunting down right's holders for permission was essential, and for the most part was successful. This resulted in sixteen out of the eighteen books being digitized and disseminated. Two books however are currently in print and owned by other institutions; permission was not granted by the current rights-holders to include these books. The two essays mentioned which would both introduce the project as well as highlight its importance were also secured and added. The 3-D model mentioned was unfortunately not produced due to



complications arising in the creator's work and teaching demands. Hopefully in the future this will be created, for the creator had expressed a sincere interest in pursuing its completion once time was available in possibly late 2018.

Overall, we were able to stay under our budget for a few reasons: the cost for the acquisitions of the rights was less than we expected, and we were able to secure a discount on the conversion procedure. If we were to retool our budget proposal, we would have included more money for personnel, as the project took far more of the intern and staff time than we had expected. Despite this, we stayed under budget and have some money left over, which we would use for promotion of this project if we are able, and/or for the development of a media rich web site to enhance the scholarly impact of the Wigman and Jones books in particular.

### **Audiences:**

The books digitized fall under two studies at Wesleyan, Dance and Theater, specifically stagecraft. They are written primarily for the academic level and thus will be somewhat limited to that range, and contribute to an understanding of the evolution of modernism within the performing arts. They are now freely available to primarily students studying in the

department Dance and as well as those studying stagecraft within the department of Theater. However, we also reached out to major Dance and Theater magazines and organizations, such as *Dance Magazine*, *Dance Spirit*, *Dance Teacher*, and *Pointe*, as well as other universities with information on these now free texts. Thus, the readership will extend beyond Wesleyan's borders. Students will now be able to utilize the now accessible information within these texts as assigned by professors, or on their own impetuous. As these books are free to use, many students, who may not belong to either of the departments, that have a passing interest in the content are now able to glean information from the books. This is due to not only making these texts more easily accessible but also by not hindering the student with a price tag.

### **Reception:**

We attended the CORD / SDHS - (Congress on Research in Dance/Society of Dance History Scholars) meeting in October. There we gave a preview of the final state of the website plus the books it contained. The response was positive, with many expressing excitement over new and easy access to these older texts. The dance scholars are most excited about the Wigman books, confirming the initial response received when we polled scholars

during our application process. In theatre, the response is more varied and variable, with most attention given to the Burian titles.

### **Continuation of the Project:**

The titles are still in process of being uploaded to HathiTrust. We sent the files to them in November 2017. The books will also go onto Project MUSE and Amazon. We are in conversation with the library about the possibility of distributing these OA titles beyond HathiTrust. We are also discussing the possibility of creating a longer list of OA backlist titles, using Cornell as a model.

### **Long Term Impact:**

Wesleyan University Press's Publication of the books identified for this Project helped to underpin and influence two scholarly disciplines in the humanities. Bringing these titles back into print as free ebooks will serve the fields of dance and theater by making these foundational texts easily accessible. This in turn supports new scholarship in dance, theater, and their historiography. Digitizing these books and making them available as a

collection will further serve scholars in dance and related fields by making visible the intellectual roots of these disciplines.